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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000068

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS MERGE WITH SMALL COMMUNIST PARTY;  
MINOR NAME CHANGE RESULTS

Classified By: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

[¶](#)1. (SBU) On January 12, the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (CPN-M), Nepal's largest party, merged with a minor communist party, the Communist Party of Nepal - Unity Center Masal (UC), to form the United Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (UCPN-M). A joint convention of the two parties' Central Committees endorsed the unification and elected Prime Minister Pushpa Dahal chairman of the unified party. Leaders held a rally on January 13 in Kathmandu to announce the merger. On January 16, the UCPN-M held its first Central Committee meeting since the unification and announced new responsibilities for its leaders. Subsequent party meetings have continued to hash out the responsibilities of the various party leaders, including the former head of the UC, who has been given a leading role in the unified party.

Two Communist Parties Unite

[¶](#)2. (SBU) On January 12, the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist and the Communist Party of Nepal - Unity Center Masal (UC) (more commonly known by its political front, the People's Front Nepal or PFN) formally merged, creating the United (or Unified) Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (UCPN-M). A joint convention of the two central committees endorsed the unification and elected Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal chairman. The convention also decided that the UCPN-M would have a 175-member central committee. It declared it was dropping Prachandapath as its guiding ideology. The enlarged party gains one cabinet seat, Minister of Health and Population Giriraj Mani Pokharel, and eight Members of Parliament in the Constituent Assembly (CA). (Note: With the addition of Pokharel, the Maoists have 11 seats in the 23-member cabinet. With the eight former PFN MPs tacked on, the Maoists have 235 MPs in what will ultimately be a 601-person CA after by-elections in April. End note.)

Rhetoric Against Imperialism

[¶](#)3. (SBU) Addressing a public rally in Kathmandu's Open Theater on January 13, PM Dahal announced that the

unification of the Maoists and Unity Center Masal heralded a new era in the fight against imperialism. Dahal called for all of the communist factions in Nepal to form a single party to protect national sovereignty and freedom. The Prime Minister lambasted entities who would interfere with the Maoists' control of the government, indirectly including his coalition partners. As reported by the leading daily newspaper, "Kantipur," outgoing UC chief Narayan Kazi Shrestha said the party would revolt if the process of drafting the people's constitution, peace process and army integration were hampered. He proclaimed that the united party would not act on the directives of "foreign powers," and that the UCPN-M would not address the "imperialists" (e.g., U.S.) and the "expansionists" (e.g., India) as big brothers (i.e., in a friendly way) because the UCPN-M wanted to protect Nepal's national independence.

#### Revised Party Leadership

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**¶4.** (SBU) On January 16, the UCPN-M held its first Central Committee meeting as a unified party. According to press reports, the party politburo was to consist of 45 members and the more powerful party secretariat of 15 members. The UCPN-M expanded the existing 11-member Maoist secretariat to include four former UC leaders. The new secretariat includes the following (in protocol order with original party in parentheses):

- Pushpa Kamal Dahal (CPN-M)

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- Mohan Baidya (CPN-M)
- Narayan Kazi Shrestha (UC)
- Baburam Bhattarai (CPN-M)
- Ram Bahadur Thapa (CPN-M)
- Chandra Prakash Gajurel (CPN-M)
- Post Bahadur Bogati (CPN-M)
- Dev Gurung (CPN-M)
- Krishna Bahadur Mahara (CPN-M)
- Netra Bikram Chand (CPN-M)
- Barshaman Pun (CPN-M)
- Amik Sherchan (UC)
- Lila Mani Pokharel (UC)
- Giriraj Mani Pokharel (UC)
- Top Bahadur Rayamajhi (CPN-M)

More Changes Follow

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**¶5.** (SBU) Since January 16, the Maoists have continued to reallocate responsibilities among their top leaders. According to the media, the Central Committee decided on January 21 to hand over the leadership of the party's activities in government, the Parliament and the street to Baburam Bhattarai, Narayan Shrestha and Mohan Baidya, respectively. These three areas correspond to the three areas the Maoists had targeted in their national cadres' meeting in November. The Central Committee meeting on the 21st postponed the decision to expand its membership to 175 members, settling for 138 members for now. It also reportedly named the party's spokesman, Dinanath Sharma, as the 16th member of the party secretariat. Post Bahadur Bogati was confirmed as the party's chief whip in the CA.

Biographic Note: Narayan Shrestha

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**¶6.** (SBU) Narayan Kazi Shrestha (aka Prakash), 48, was named to the central Secretariat of the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on January 16, 2009. He was the General Secretary of Communist Party of Nepal - Unity Center Masal from 2001 to January 11, 2009. He began his political career as a student activist with the Nepali Congress and was imprisoned in 1976 in Kathmandu. He was imprisoned again in 1980 in Gorkha district and again in 1986 in Lalitpur. He

joined the Nepal Communist Party -- Fourth Congress in 1981. He was underground for almost two decades and did not formally come out of hiding until the monarchy was abolished in May 2008. Shrestha played a special role in brokering the November 2005 12-Point Agreement. He was born in 1960 at Jaubari in Gorkha district. He has a Master's degree in Public Administration from Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu. Shrestha, who is a Newar, is single.

Comment: More Mergers Unlikely

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¶7. (C) Much fanfare surrounded the merger of two communist parties, but -- despite the Prime Minister's rhetoric -- the UCPN-M is unlikely to inspire a wave of communist unification. Although a faction within the large Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) would perhaps welcome unification with the Maoists, that faction is small and the gap between the two parties' ideologies is still too big. Notwithstanding its hard-line name -- and its militant Youth Force -- the UML is more social democratic than revolutionary in outlook. The other communist parties in the CA also have too little in common with the Maoists to join them.

POWELL